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EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Todd W. Wight on 06/15/11.

The application has been amended as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1-29. (Canceled).

30. (Currently amended) A catheter assembly, comprising:

a catheter including at least one lumen; and

a connector including a distal end attached to a proximal end of the catheter and a passageway in fluid communication with the at least one lumen,

a proximal portion of the passageway including an engagement feature configured to connect an end of an instrument to the connector, a distal portion of the passageway including a built-in valve longitudinally fixed with respect to the connector having a closed proximal end with a slit and an open distal end, the valve proximal end distal of the engagement feature;

a tunneler, wherein the engagement feature engages a tip of the tunneler upon insertion of the tunneler tip into the proximal portion of the passageway.

31. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the valve includes a wall defining a lumen from the proximal end to the distal end, the wall configured to guide a proximal end of a guidewire from the valve distal end through the slit in the valve proximal end.

32. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the connector comprises a material having a hardness in the range of about 90 Shore A to about 90 Shore D, and wherein the valve comprises a material having a hardness in the range of about 40 Shore A to about 60 Shore A.

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33. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the engagement feature comprises an O-ring, and wherein a wall defining the proximal portion of the passageway proximal of the O-ring is tapered.

34-39. (Cancelled)

40. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the connector includes an tapered outer surface at a proximal end thereof.

41. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 40, further comprising a syringe adaptor including a distal end configured to slide over the tapered proximal end of the connector housing and a proximal opening to receive a male luer.

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the valve opens by insertion of a medical device through the valve.

44. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the valve proximal end is longitudinally fixed with respect to the connector.

45. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the valve proximal end is fixed relative to the engagement feature.

46. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 30, wherein the engagement feature includes a projection into the passageway.

47. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly according to claim 46, wherein the projection has a reduced diameter relative to an inside diameter of the passageway on a proximal side and a distal side of the projection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 30-33, 40-41, 43-47 are allowed over the prior art of record as amended in this office action.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The claims in this application have been allowed because the prior art of record fails to disclose either single or in combination the claimed medical device/method including: a connector including a distal end attached to a proximal end of

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the catheter and a passageway in fluid communication with the at least one lumen, a proximal portion of the passageway including an engagement feature for connecting an instrument to the connector, a distal portion of the passageway including a built-in valve longitudinally fixed with respect to the connector having a closed proximal end with a slit and an open distal end, the valve proximal end distal of the engagement feature; a tunneler, wherein the engagement feature engages a tip of the tunneler upon insertion of the tunneler tip into the proximal portion of the passageway.

The closest prior art of record is Canaud et al. (US 2004/0193119), Wilson et al. (US 6,921,396), Krug (US 4,502,502) and Duncan et al. (US 4,535,818), however these references do not disclose the device as claimed or described above.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to QUYNH-NHU H. VU whose telephone number is (571)272-3228. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:00 am to 3:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nicholas Lucchesi can be reached on 571-272-4977. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Nicholas D Lucchesi/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3763

/QUYNH-NHU H VU/
Examiner of Art Unit 3763